of intent are at various stages of implementation. No definite time schedule for completion of these projects can be indicated.

Modernisation of Bidhanbag Unit of BALCO

2955. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to modernise the Bidhanbag unit of BALCO at Jaykaynagar; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) and (b) The formerly sick unit of Aluminium Corporation of India Ltd. (ALUCOIN) at Jaykaynagar in West Bengal in the private sector was nationalised through an Act of Parliament and vested in Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. (BALCO) on 2nd June, 1984. After nationalisation this unit was renamed as Bidhanbag Unit of BALCO.

BALCO has been operating the fabrication facilities producing Rolled Products Extrusions, Foils and Conductors. The annual production capacity of the above products was assessed at 6400 tonnes. However, due to obsolescence of the plant and equipment the annual production has been 3023 tonnes during 1985-86, 2475 tonnes during 1986-87 and 1607 tonnes during 1987-88. For the year 1988-89, an annual target of 2000 tonnes only has been fixed.

BALCO has proposals to modernise the existing fabrication facilities at Bidhanbag Unit in Stages, keeping in view its financial resources, etc. in a phased manner. A beginning has been made by initiating action on modernisation of the conductor plant. This is proposed to be followed by modernisation of other units like extrusion and foil plants to produce value added items.

Selection of Pressmen/Newsmen to accompany Prime Minister on Foreign Tours

2956. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria adopted for selection of pressmen/newsmen for accompanying the Prime Minister on foreign tours;

(b) whether all the regional languages are given representation; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) to c) The main criterian is to secure the best possible coverage for the visit. Weightage is given to persons having adequate experience in covering international affairs, PM's engagements, etc. To the extent possible representation is given to regional language newspapers.

Problems of Bidhanbag Unit of BALCO

2957. SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bidhanbag unit of Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO) at Jaykaynagar is plagued with Major problems like lack of orders, investment and raw materials;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ease the problems facing the company?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) to (c) The formerly